

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O P 021814Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 8794

INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

USCINCSO PRIORITY

S E C R E T GUATEMALA 6088 FINAL SECTION OF 2

EXDIS

TO THE USE OF FORCE. AN ATTEMPT TO EXERT GREATER PRESSURE IS NOT LIKELY TO DETER THE GUATEMALAN MILITARY AND WOULD JEOPARDIZE OUR ENTIRE RELATIONSHIP WITH GUATEMALA.

7. A SECOND OPTION WOULD BE FOR THE BRITISH TO REINFORCE THEIR GARRISON. AN UNDEFENDED SOUTHERN BELIZE IS A TEMPTING TARGET; ONE WITH A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF BRITISH TROOPS IN POSITION AND NAVAL FORCES OFF-SHORE IS NOT. HOWEVER, WE ARE NO LONGER DEALING, AS WE WERE TWO MONTHS AGO, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A CLANDESTINE MILITARY ADVENTURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BRITISH UNPREPAREDNESS. WE ARE NOW FACING THE PROSPECT OF AN OVERT MILITARY MOVE UNDERTAKEN OUT OF DESPERATION IN AN EFFORT TO SALVAGE SOMETHING FOR GUATEMALA. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT IN THE EMOTIONAL ATMOSPHERE THAT WILL FOLLOW UNGA ACTION, AND GIVEN THE LIMITED NATURE OF THE OBJECTIVE, THAT THE GUATEMALANS ARE LIKELY TO BE DETERRED BY EVEN SIZEABLE BRITISH FORCES IN BELIZE.

8. IF GUATEMALA CANNOT BE DETERRED, THEN IT MUST BE OFFERED ALTERNATIVES MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN MILITARY ACTION. ONE ALTERNATIVE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF REFERRING THE BELIZE DISPUTE TO THE ICJ. IN VIEW OF PAST BRITISH OPPOSITION, THIS RECOURSE, IF PURSUED, SHOULD BE RAISED WITH THE BRITISH AT THE SECRETARY'S LEVEL. IT IS MOST UNLIKELY UNDER PREVAILING CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD THAT THE COURT WOULD RULE AGAINST THE RIGHT OF BELIZE TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND

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INDEPENDENCE. IF THE BRITISH WISH TO AVOID GIVING LEGAL

RECOGNITION TO GUATEMALA'S CLAIM, THEY COULD SUBMIT THE TREATY OF 1859 TO THE COURT FOR A DETERMINATION AS TO WHETHER GUATEMALA'S 1946 DENUNCIATION OF THE TREATY WAS VALID OR WHETHER UNDER EQUITABLE PRINCIPLES GUATEMALA IS ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION BECAUSE OF THE UNFULFILLED ARTICLE 7. AGREEMENT ON THE TERMS OF THE SUBMISSION TO THE COURT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT, BUT TEDIOUS NEGOTIATIONS IS PREFERABLE TO MILITARY CONFLICT.

9. FINALLY THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF AN EFFORT TO FOSTER A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. CONFLICT MAY STILL BE AVOIDABLE IF AT THE TIME THE DRAFT RESOLUTION IS PASSED, OR SOONER, THE BRITISH GIVE THE GOG A FACE-SAVING WAY OUT. THIS WOULD INVOLVE A PUBLIC (A PRIVATE OFFER WOULD BE MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE) OFFER TO NEGOTIATE WITH GUATEMALA TO MEET GUATEMALA'S SECURITY AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS. ECONOMIC CONCERNS INCLUDE: (A) A MARITIME BOUNDARY IN THE BAY OF AMATIQUE, (B) FISHING AND SEABED RIGHTS IN THE BAY AND (C) GUATEMALA'S ACCESS TO BELIZEAN PORTS. HOWEVER, IT IS SECURITY THAT IS OF GREATEST CONCERN TO THE GOG. AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING MIGHT BE CONSIDERED: (A) LIMITS ON EACH OTHER'S RIGHTS TO ENTER INTO MILITARY ACCORDS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES, (B) PROMISES TO COOPERATE IN EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION ON THREATS TO THE SECURITY OF THE OTHER STATE, (C) PLEDGES NOT TO ALLOW THE TERRITORY OF ONE PARTY TO BE USED AS A BASE FOR OVERT OR COVERT ATTACK AGAINST THE OTHER, AND (D) A COMMITMENT THAT AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE WOULD ADHERE TO THE RIO TREATY.

10. SATISFACTION OF THESE GUATEMALAN CONCERNS IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE DRAFT RESOLUTION. THEY DO NOT INFRINGE UPON BELIZE'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION OR TO THE MAINTENANCE OF HER TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THESE MATTERS ARE, HOWEVER, OF IMPORTANCE TO GUATEMALA, AND A STATEMENT OF BRITISH WILLINGNESS TO TRY TO MEET THESE CONCERNS MIGHT FORESTALL A MILITARY ADVENTURE. THE MODERATES COULD ARGUE THAT GUATEMALA WAS NOT BEING HUMILIATED OVER BELIZE. ON THE CONTRARY, NEGOTIATIONS WOULD STILL OFFER THE POSSIBILITY THAT GUATEMALA'S LEGITIMATE CONCERNS CAN BE MET.

11. IF, HOWEVER, THE BRITISH ARE UNWILLING TO OFFER THE GOG
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SOME FORMULA PERMITTING GUATEMALA A WAY OUT, THEN THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT PASSAGE OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION WILL LEAD TO A GOG DECISION TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION IN BELIZE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, UNGA RESOLUTIONS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, NEGOTIATIONS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, THREATS, INVASIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GUATEM06088
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P750173-1554
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751183/aaaacwzf.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BELIZE: UK AND GUATEMALA ON A COLLISION COURSE
TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, GT, BH, UK, UNGA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006